

NOAA ELP Funding Opportunity Teleconference

September 27, 2021

3:00 pm ET

Coordinator: Welcome and thank you for standing by. All participants are in listen-only mode until the question-and-answer session of today's call. To ask a question at that time, please press star 1, unmute your phone and record your name. Today's conference is also being recorded. If you disagree, you may disconnect. It is now my pleasure to turn the call over to your host, Ms. Carrie McDougall. Thank you. And you may begin.

Carrie McDougall: Thank you. Hello and welcome to the September 27, 2021, Informational Teleconference for NOAA's Fiscal Year 2022 Environmental Literacy Program Grant Funding Announcement.

I am Carrie McDougall, as the Operator just mentioned. I am one of the Federal Program Officers for this opportunity. And I'm going to hand it over to the two other Program Officers who will be serving on this program as well to introduce themselves. And we'll start with John.

John McLaughlin: Hi all. I'm John McLaughlin from the Office of Education. And I serve as a Program Officer for the Environmental Literacy Program.

Sarah Schoedinger: Hi. This is Sarah Schoedinger, also a Federal Program Officer with the Office of Education. Thanks.

Carrie McDougall: Thank you. So the three of us will be hosting - will be leading the teleconference today. And other members of our team, whom you may hear chiming in during our Q&A period, are Maggie Beetstra, Christopher Nelson, and Maggie Allen.

This teleconference is being transcribed. And we will post the transcription of today's call to our Frequently Asked Questions or a FAQ web site by about October 4th. We also offered this telecon last week, which was the exact same content. But if you want to read the

transcript from that telecon where the questions may be different, we will post that transcript as well in the same place.

What we'll be doing today is beginning with an overview of the 2022 Environmental Literacy Program Funding Opportunity, specifically priority one. And then we'll take your questions.

As the Operator indicated, all of you are muted for the first part of the teleconference. Once we complete the funding opportunity overview, then you'll indicate that you have a question. Per the Operator's instruction, you'll enter a queue. And when the operator indicates to you the unmuted and you'll be able to ask your question to us.

We will be reviewing the published funding opportunity with you. And so you'll want to have a way you can view that document while we overview it. To make sure you're looking at the correct opportunity, it should be titled Environmental Literacy Program: Increasing Community Resilience to Extreme Weather and Climate Change. We'll cover how to get a copy if you don't already have one.

And as we go along, please note any questions you have, and then we'll take those questions after we complete the overview.

So if you don't yet have a copy of the Notice of Funding Opportunity, also known by the acronym NOFO, you want to go to [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) using an Internet browser, click on the Search Grants tab in the upper left corner. And after you click on that, you'll see three basic search criteria also in the upper left corner.

And you can use any of these criteria to find the current opportunity. For example, you can type environmental literacy into the keyword area, or you can type 11.008 into the CFDA Number area. And then once you've done one of those searches, make sure you click on the Funding Opportunity Number NOAA-SEC-OED- 2022-2006995.

After you've clicked on that funding opportunity, it'll open up a new page. And you want to click on View Grant Opportunity. That will open the synopsis for the opportunity in the middle of the page. This synopsis information is for the entire competition. And this competition has multiple priorities embedded in it.

And so what you see on the closing date on this synopsis page is actually the third of three deadlines that are associated with this overall funding opportunity. So please note that that is not the deadline for the pre-applications for priority one, which is we believe what you're interested in knowing about. That deadline is November 1, 2021.

If you click on the tab called Package, it's in blue, here you will see that there are different application packages for the different components of this competition, which we will get into shortly. And you can see the different deadlines there.

So again, today, we're just going to be primarily talking about the pre-application phase that exists for priority one or Competition ID 2997715.

Also, in grants.gov, if you click on the Related Documents tab, you will see a table with links to the full announcement. Click on the second full announcement link, which will open a PDF version of the funding opportunity. This is the document we will be overviewing today.

Please note, we may need to make minor updates to the NOFO. So if you sign up to receive updates in grants.gov, you'll automatically be notified when we make any changes.

So this Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity, or NOFO, is the primary documents that you should use to guide your application construction, and submission. This funding opportunity is soliciting two types of projects through separate competitive priorities. Priority one will support new projects, new to NOAA, from applicants serving audiences in the Central and Eastern Regions of the United States. Priority two will support the continued evolution of Environmental Literacy Program grant projects that were funded in 2015 through 2018.

This telecon, again, is for priority one. If you are eligible for priority two, we are hosting a telecon for that priority on October 20th. Due to very high demand for these grants, in 2020 we decided to limit the applicants to those in about half of the states. This geographic restriction limits the number of applications that can be submitted and thereby increases the odds of an application being successful and receiving funding.

In 2020, the competition solicited proposals from the Western and Southern Regions of the United States and all U.S. territories. Although we did not make awards in all eligible states due to funding limitations, we are now focusing on the other half of the country or the Eastern and Central Regions.

These regions include the following states, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. The entirety of a project must only serve audiences located in one or more of those states I just read. This geographic restriction pertains to the audiences that will be served and not on where the submitting organization is based.

So your institution could be in a state that is not eligible. But if the project will be serving audiences only in eligible states, then the project would be eligible. So, for example, say you're part of an organization that is headquartered in California, but the work is going to be conducted by an arm of the organization or a partner that is based in Pennsylvania and all of the audience is served by the work are located in Pennsylvania, then the project would be eligible.

We anticipate this priority to be very competitive, like the recent competitions we've offered. Because we anticipate a large number of projects requesting funding to priority one. There is a pre-application requirement. Pre-applications are brief project narratives and do not require the full suite of federal forms to be submitted. The pre-applications will be merit reviewed and only the most highly ranked pre-application will be authorized to submit a full application. We do this to minimize the work you have to do, given the anticipated competitiveness of this funding opportunity.

For example, in 2020, we received 163 pre-applications, 46 of which were authorized to submit a full application. We funded six awards across two fiscal years of funding. Despite having a bit more funding in this coming fiscal year, we still expect a similar high level of competitiveness.

In this telecon, we will be focusing on the aspects that are relevant to the pre-application process for priority one. The first thing you should do is make sure you read the entire NOFO. It's a dense document. It's long, but there's lots of important information throughout that you need to make sure you understand.

We're going to now be looking at the NOFO. The first several pages of it are basically a summary of the rest of the document. We're going to skip ahead to start on Page 6, which includes the background and rationale for the program.

So what I'm going to do is I'm going to read some portions of the document to you to draw your attention to certain aspects. But again, you should make sure you read the entire document.

So starting on Page 6 of the PDF, at the top it says full announcement text. I'm just going to start reading a few pieces to you.

So in the first paragraph, a little bit of program history. Since the program's inception, that's the Environmental Literacy Program, grants have supported formal and informal education activities at local, regional, and national levels to address NOAA's mission of science, service, and stewardship. This mission is directed toward a vision of the future where communities and their ecosystems are healthy and resilient in the face of sudden or prolonged change.

Next paragraph. It is indisputable that human activities are causing climate change and that these activities have warmed the atmosphere, ocean, and land at an unprecedented rate in at least the last 2000 years. As a result of extreme climate events, including heatwaves, heavy rainfall, and droughts are now more frequent and severe.

And on Page 7, in the US, these observed changes and climate impacts include, but are not limited to severe storms, hurricanes, flooding, heavy precipitation events, persistent drought, heatwaves, wildfires, increased global temperatures, acidification of the ocean, and sea-level rise. The U.S. is experiencing a rising number of costly and damaging weather and climate events.

Next, paragraph. Climate change threatens human health and safety, ecosystem health, and social and economic well-being. The geographic distribution of climate change impacts is uneven and longstanding socioeconomic inequities heighten vulnerabilities for underserved groups. These threats become even greater with increasing rates of greenhouse gas emission.

Next paragraph. To prepare for a future of increasing climate impacts, communities need to implement more policies and practices that allow their members, regardless of socioeconomic status, to thrive and be resilient. These policies and practices should be informed by engaged community members and leaders who understand the causes of climate change and its impacts on their own lives now and in the future.

Decisions about how to build more resilient and equitable communities should be based on scientific, traditional, and community knowledge and represent the values of society because this contributes to better accepted and more robust policies. Increasing environmental literacy among community members ensures that they comprehend the complex ways that human and natural systems interact both globally and locally, and have the required skills, motivation, and confidence to participate in decisions that inform public policies affecting their lives and their communities.

The next paragraph that spans Page 7 and onto Page 8, I'm not going to read it to you, but it's an important paragraph to understand why it is important for projects to focus on solutions to climate change and getting participants to take action as opposed to focus on building understanding of climate change.

So jumping down to the first full paragraph on Page 8. For these reasons, NOAA's Environmental Literacy Program grant competitions have since 2015 concentrated on community resilience education and funded projects, funded approaches that are climate solutions-oriented, locally focused, and engage, educate and empower participants to take action individually and collectively. Based on data and knowledge coming from funded projects and literature sources in 2020 our program developed and published NOAA's Community Resilience Education Theory of Change. And we provide a web site for you to see it.

This framing document provides a conceptual framework for the ways in which community resilience education can lead to increased community engagement and civic action, ultimately leading to a healthier, more resilient, and equitable society. As such, it lays out many important concepts, definitions, outcomes, and goals that structure this grant program, including the goal of this funding opportunity.

So the next paragraph at the very bottom of Page 8 is where we state the goal of this funding opportunity. This is a very important paragraph, so I'm going to read the entire thing. The goal of this funding opportunity is for communities to have sufficient collective environmental literacy to take actions that builds resilience to extreme weather and climate change in ways that contribute to community health, social cohesion, and social-economic equity.

These communities are composed of children, youth, and adults who participate in formal and/or informal education experiences that develop their knowledge, skills, and confidence to, number one, reason about the ways that human and natural systems interact globally and locally, including the acknowledgment of disproportionately distributed vulnerabilities; two, participate in civic processes; and three, incorporate scientific information, cultural knowledge, and diverse community values in decision-making.

Efforts to build environmental literacy should ultimately aim to reduce risk from current and future environmental hazards, the climate-smart, and inclusive decision-making, and long-term stewardship of healthy ecosystems all the while, promoting a low carbon economy.

Note this funding solicitation does not fund research. So keep that in mind if you're thinking about a research project.

I'm going to hand it over to my colleague, Sarah.

Sarah Schoedinger: Thanks, Carrie. Okay. So we're at the bottom of Page 8 in the section that starts Description of Project Activities. The project should develop the collective environmental literacy necessary for communities to take actions that build resilience to extreme weather and climate change in ways that contribute to community health, social cohesion, and

socioeconomic equity. NOAA's Community Resilience Education Theory of Change should be used to inform key aspects of the project, including its design and logic model.

Skipping down to the next paragraph. The Theory of Change also includes many important definitions, including a definition for community resilience education. I'm not going to read that definition here. But you will definitely want to be familiar with it as it is core to our NOFO goal.

Also, in addition to definitions, many of the concepts we use throughout this NOFO are unpacked in the Theory of Change Report. So it's definitely a resource you're going to want to use as you develop your project idea.

And now down in the middle of this paragraph on Page 9 that starts each individual in a community does not need to develop their knowledge, skills, and confidence to the same extent. But the community should collectively and sufficiently have these capabilities for use and resilience-building initiatives.

And this is what we mean by collective environmental literacy here. The theory of change describes the characteristics of community resilience education projects. The following paragraphs describe how projects should attempt to incorporate these characteristics. One note about the theory of change. It does not come comprehensively cover every way in which education can play a role in building community resilience.

So if your project plans to implement activities that are not well represented in the theory of change, please include a justification for that as part of your application. So I just want to note that it doesn't mean you're not allowed to propose those ideas if they're not represented in the theory of change. We just need you to include a justification.

Projects should support diversity, equity, inclusion, and climate justice in all aspects of the project, i.e. target audience or audiences, partners, Project Leadership Team, location of the project and its potential impacts, the use of culturally appropriate approaches. Particular attention should be paid to community members that have greater exposure to and have fewer resources to deal with the extreme weather and/or climate change impacts that are the focus

of the proposed project. Relevant socioeconomic, cultural, and ecological factors in the location or locations should be described as well as the culturally appropriate approaches.

Starting at the bottom of Page 9, projects should demonstrate how they will engage community members in social and active learning. Social learning is learning that occurs within social units or communities of practice through social interactions between individuals within social networks.

Active learning is a process whereby learners actively construct new ideas, perspectives, understanding, etcetera, and/or reconstruct, add to, or completely dismantle old ideas. Active and social learning often go hand in hand. These learning approaches such as citizen science, deliberative forum, participatory decision-making, and mapping exercises, and scenario-based or role-playing activities and games emphasize exploring and implementing community-scale solutions and create venues for social learning to take place.

One side note. So these last few sentences help describe these two terms. And I also want to note that we also include them in our Definition Section at the end of this NOFO.

Now I'm down in the second or the first full paragraph on Page 10. To promote action by the target audience or audiences by facilitating opportunities for civic engagement and empowering participants to be agents of change. These approaches should work to inspire hope in the target audiences. Relevant regional, state, and/or local resilience plans and partnering with institutions and individuals, including, but not limited to resilience practitioners who are involved in efforts to develop or implement those plans.

So all of what I've just highlighted thus far in this section are part of our theory of change.

Now I'm going to read the next paragraph that begins projects may focus on a single location or multiple locations. They should focus on the most pertinent, current, and future environmental hazard or a range of hazards that impact a community or communities in the selected location or locations.

So you can focus on one hazard in one community. You can focus on one hazard in multiple communities. You can focus on multiple hazards in a single community, or you can focus on

multiple hazards across multiple communities. It's up for you to decide what makes the most sense based on the hazards and the audiences and the communities that you're trying to reach.

Nevertheless, the selected hazards should be informed by the regional, state, and/or local resilience plan or plans that is or are being incorporated into the project. Projects should be based on established scientific evidence regarding current and future extreme weather and climate impacts facing the target community or communities. In addition to natural science information projects should incorporate knowledge about local, social, cultural, historical, and economic factors that mediate participant's capacity to reason about the ways human and natural systems interact.

And finally, projects should focus on solutions and their inherent tradeoff in ways that clearly foster the implementation of those solutions within their community or communities.

I'm now at the bottom of Page 10. Projects may consider incorporating proposed activities that will build knowledge, skill, and competencies that are transferable to resilient careers and may also help target audiences, develop personal agency to affect change in their communities.

Although such work is not currently a direct focus of a causal pathway within the theory of change, rapid decarbonization of our economy will require many more workers trained in these areas. So preparing more people to be able to pursue careers will - in this area will economically empower them. It is also important that the future resilient workforce reflects the diversity of U.S. communities as this will help achieve equitable resilience.

I'm now at the top of Page 11. Please note. There may be additional funding available for projects that implement the proposed Civilian Climate Corps Initiative as called for an Executive Order Number 14008. Applicants or partners who would be existing Corps network members or other organizations that offer paid training, career development skills, and/or job pathways into climate-resilient careers.

Minimally, projects should include information for target audiences on possible climate resilience-related careers and pathways that lead to those careers.

I'm now in the middle of Page 11. In addition, projects must utilize NOAA's scientific data, data access tools, data visualizations, and/or other physical and intellectual assets available on these topics. For example, the U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit.

Facilitate the use of the NOAA assets, projects are strongly encouraged to partner with relevant NOAA entities. This is a program. And/or NOAA employees and affiliates. And we provide some web sites in the remainder of this paragraph where you can identify those resilience assets and potential partners.

There are a number of NOAA staff who offer a significant amount of climate science and resilience expertise. Applicants are encouraged to consider involving representatives from these programs as project advisers or partners.

So let me just stop here and say the use of NOAA assets, the data, data visualization, data access tools, other intellectual assets are a must. We do not fund projects that don't use NOAA science and science resources. Those scientific assets.

The involvement of a partner is not a requirement. But what we found is that projects tend to be more successful in implementing the use of those scientific assets when they involve a NOAA science partner.

Okay, I'm now at the bottom of Page 11. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review Community Resilience Education Projects funded by this program since 2015 and proposed projects should be informed by the lessons learned by these grantees.

Every 18 to 24 months, NOAA convenes grantees to share ideas, best practices, and lessons learned from their NOAA-funded Resilience Education Project. To ensure your project benefits from the latest learning from the ELP community of practice, please see the 2021 NOAA Environmental Literacy Program Resilience Education Grantee Workshop Report. And the URL is provided in the sentence there at the top of Page 12.

I'm now going to start on target audiences. Target audiences for this funding opportunity are children, youth, and/or adults, and they also include informal educators, including interpreters and docents and formal educators, meaning pre or in-service teachers and also school administrators. Professionals already working in the area of community resilience and

higher education students are not target audiences for this funding opportunity. However, they can serve as members of the Project Team and receive funding for their efforts.

Education includes lifelong learning that occurs within the formal grades K-12 System, and outside of it. There is no single ideal age to engage. Rather, the audiences engaged will vary by community and the hazards being faced. So you don't need to engage children, youth, and adults. Pick the audience that makes the most sense for the community you're trying to engage in your work and focus on that. Don't feel that you need to try and address all three unless it makes sense to do so for the project you want to propose.

Okay. I'm now in the middle of Page 12. There is a particular interest in projects that specifically engage underserved members of the community. Defined here is people who have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life who are also highly vulnerable to climate change impacts.

A recent report from the EPA notes which groups are most vulnerable to climate change impacts. And we provided a link to that report on Page 47 of this NOFO. These underserved and highly vulnerable community members face greater exposure to extreme weather and climate change impacts. And they have fewer resources to prepare for and adapt to associated with.

So projects should employ approaches and partnerships that are appropriate for the targeted, underserved, and highly vulnerable population.

Projects are strongly encouraged to develop meaningful partnerships with community-based organizations, particularly those from underserved and highly vulnerable communities within the area or areas served by the project. CBO partners should contribute to the conceptualization of the project, as well as its implementation, the Project Leadership or Advisory Teams.

Adequate compensation should be provided for community-based organization partners and community members for the effort they are contributing to the project.

Now, at the bottom of Page 12. Applicants are encouraged to use demographic weather and climate data, as well as a basis for determining where work will occur and the audience this work will serve and describe how these data were used to support programmatic decisions.

Now, a brief note about project evaluation. All projects should include an evaluation component. But for priority one, you do not need to talk about evaluation plans in your pre-application. There's no requirement to describe those at this stage. That comes into play when we're talking about full application.

So I'm going to skip the remainder of this section on Page 13 and go to Page 14. Also another note on dissemination of project results and product, we're going to skip that section right now because, again, this is not something that your pre-application will be evaluated on. Just something that we'll focus on in the full application phase of the competition.

So now a little bit further than midway down the page on award date submission goal. And I just want to note that as far as award dates are concerned, any awards that are funded under this announcement during fiscal year 2022 will be made by September 30, 2022. We do not anticipate funding any projects that start earlier than 1 October 2022.

I'm now down at the bottom of Page 14 on program priorities. So as Carrie noted at the beginning of this call, we have two priorities and obviously we're focused on priority one. There is no - the numbering of the priorities is not an indication of the importance of either priority. So both are of equal importance for funding.

Priority one awards will support new projects taking place in the central and eastern regions of the United States. And I'm just going to reread those dates again so you're clear on what they are: Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming, the entirety of the project must only serve audiences located in one or more of the listed states.

And as Carrie noted earlier, the previous funding opportunity for this program covered the other half of the United States and its territories.

We stress this because this is also an eligibility criterion, and your eligibility will be determined on whether or not your project is engaging audiences in these states, not on the location of the submitting institution.

Okay. So I'm going to skip down to just above program authority on Page 15. An applicant may only submit a given project idea to one priority or the other. In the event a project is submitted to both priorities, Office of Education staff will contact the applying institution to ask them which application should be withdrawn.

Okay. I'm going to turn things over to John if you're ready. John?

John McLaughlin: Thanks so much, Sarah. I'm going to start on Section 2 on the bottom of Page 15, top of Page 16, award information. I will cover Sections 2 through 3, which occupy a total of 35 pages for the remainder of this notice of federal funding. Don't worry. I will only focus on the sections most relevant to priority one pre-application preparation.

NOAA anticipates that approximately \$5 million may be available in fiscal year 2022 for this announcement. Approximately 7 to 12 awards among both priorities in the form of cooperative agreements will be made in 2022.

And I want to clarify that cooperative agreements are an award instruments that provide financial assistance and has potential involvement of the agency making them. We use this instrument since NOAA will have involvement in any project funded.

Top ranked applications not funded in the current fiscal year may be considered for funding in fiscal year 2023 without NOAA repeating the competitive process outlined in this announcement.

All projects in both priorities must be between two and five years in duration and the total federal funding request requested from NOAA for each project must be no less than \$250,000 and no more than \$500,000 for all years of the project, including direct and indirect costs.

Coming down to Section 3, eligibility information, on Page 17, for both priorities of this funding opportunity, eligible applicants are limited to institutions of higher education, K through 12 public and independent schools and school systems, other nonprofits, including community-based organizations and informal education institutions such as museums, zoos and aquariums, state and local government agencies and Indian Tribal governments in the United States.

For-profit organizations, foreign institutions and individuals are not eligible to apply, however, for-profit organizations, foreign institutions and individuals may participate as project partners. Likewise, federal agencies are not eligible to receive federal assistance under this announcement but may be project partners.

We then list the list of states that are eligible for priority one. Carrie and Sarah already read this list. I will not do so again. However, I will reiterate that the entirety of a project must only serve audiences located in one or more of these listed states. Inclusion of a location not listed in the list of states will result in disqualification of the pre-application and full application of this priority.

It is strongly encouraged that an individual will serve as a principal investigator or PI on only one application submitted to this funding opportunity.

Institutions may submit more than one application. And the individuals may serve as co-PI's or key personnel on more than one application. Federal employees may not serve as PI's or co-PI's on any application although they may be included as key personnel.

Moving on to Part B, cost sharing or matching requirement. This section is short. There is no cost sharing requirement.

Section C or Part C, other criteria that affects eligibility. Pre-applications and full applications must be submitted by the due date and time provided in Section 4D. Late pre-applications and full applications will not be considered for funding.

Submission time will be documented by electronic submission to go to grants.gov. And I want to note that we accept no other types of applications except those submitted through grants.gov. So there is no emailing of files or anything of that nature.

On to Section 4, application submission information and the address to request application package. Pre-application and full application packages, including required federal forms and instructions, are available through grants.gov. Grants.gov requires applicants to register with the system prior to submitting an application.

This registration process may take several weeks and involves multiple steps. In order to allow sufficient time for this process, you should consider registering as soon as you decide you intend to apply even if you are not ready to submit your pre-application at this point.

Grants.gov will not accept submissions if the applicant has not been authorized or if the credentials are incorrect. Authorizations and credential corrections can take several days to establish. Please plan accordingly to avoid any problems with the submission process.

If any applicant has problems downloading the pre-application or full application forms from grants.gov, uploading the pre-application or full application into the grants.gov system or using the grants.gov workspace, please contact the grants.gov customer support team at the phone number and email address provided here.

I will let you know that our team at the Office of Education is not able to see the interface that you'll be seeing when you submit to grants.gov. So we are not equipped to help you through submission if you have grants.gov navigation issues. The grants.gov customer support team is so please do make them your first point of contact for any grants.gov related issues.

On to Part B, content and form of application. For priority one, each application must submit a pre-application through grants.gov for review. Pre-applications are required to prevent expenditure of effort on qualifications that are not likely to be successful.

All applicants will receive a response to the pre-application via email from NOAA, indicating whether or not they are authorized to submit a qualification for the project.

Only those institutions that receive authorization from NOAA are eligible to submit a full application. Failure of an applicant, to submit a pre-application or a full application before the deadline will result in the project not being merit reviewed or receiving any additional consideration.

You can see our Office of Education frequently asked questions Web site for priority one, the first link provided here in the section.

On to format requirements. I won't read these. I'll just mention that these exist and please make sure you adhere to them. So there is no reducing to a 6 point font to be able to fit all of you information in a specific page requirement. You do need to follow our format requirements.

And then we have content requirements. Each pre-application must contain the following three elements. And that's that 424, Application of Federal Assistance form, a title page. On this, please use the title page template available at the URL provided here. Whether or not the title page template is used, a title page must be submitted and contain all of the following elements.

One, the project title, two, the proposed start and end dates, three, the funding amount requested from NOAA, four, the priorities for which the application is being submitted, five, the principal investigator and co-PI names, affiliations, email addresses and telephone numbers and the PI listed on the title page should be affiliated with the institution submitting the pre-application, six, the summary, which is limited to 150 words maximum, seven the list of Project Partners, which includes NOAA partners,

Section 8, a list of NOAA assets that will be integrated into the project activities to achieve the project goals and objectives and please note the link here to our resilient asset page, which can help you find relevant NOAA assets, and finally nine, the described location where your project will take place, including all the states and territories where the audiences will be served.

It's really important that you provide this information accurately on your title page because we'll be using this to determine if your project is eligible or not based on the restrictions for states and District of Columbia that we already described for priority one.

On to the project description, which has a four page limit. This section should expand on the project executive summary to describe the project more clearly. There should be a clear, concise and well-supported statement of the project's rationale citing any relevant front end evaluations or other needs assessment.

The rationale should include how the goal of this funding opportunity will be met as described in Section 1A. I will not read the remainder of this section, but please note this is the content your project will be reviewed on. Also no project descriptions that exceed the four page limit will be truncated beyond the fourth page and the information will not be forwarded to reviewers.

An additional note, that pre-apps do not have to submit budget descriptions or justification as you may have noticed beyond providing a number for the requested funding on the title page and the SF-424 form.

I'm now going to jump to Section 4D, submission dates and times in the middle of Page 30. And I'll give us all a second to scroll down to or flip over to Page 30.

All right. Submission dates and times. The deadline you need for priority one pre-applications is 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on November 1, 2021.

As previously noted, there are two informational telecoms for this priority. This is the second of which. The first of which was a replicate of the same information presented and we will be posting transcripts.

All right. On to Section G, other submission requirements on Page 31. And I do want to note that it may take grants.gov up to two business days to validate or reject any submission. Please keep this in mind when developing your submission timeline.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring all required elements have been appropriately submitted before the deadline. We don't want anyone to submit late. It is a sad situation when it happens. So please, as much as possible, try to plan accordingly and submit early so you do not run into any issues right at the submission deadline.

All right. On to Section 5 and the evaluation criteria. I'm not going to read the evaluation criteria to you. But do note there are different criteria for pre-applications as opposed to full applications. Please consider these as you prepare your project descriptions.

Now we're going to go down to Section 5B, review and selection process in the middle of Page 35. All right, review and selection process. Upon receipt of an application by NOAA, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with minimum requirements, much like being late we don't want to disqualify any pre-application for these minimum requirements.

So please listen carefully and make sure your pre-application adheres to these minimum requirements for priority one pre-applications, which include all of the following.

That the applicant is eligible to apply. The applicant has submitted the required project narrative and title page. The entirety of the project is only serving audiences located in one or more of the eligible states.

And you can see Section 3A, eligible applicants with the eligible states and it's also as stated in the locations. And we'll judge this based on what you state in the locations of where your project will take place field on the title page.

Also the total federal request for all years of the project. It must be no more than \$500,000 and no less than \$250,000. And as previously mentioned, we will check that the pre-application was received on time.

Going down to Page 36, pre-applications. All pre-applications that meet eligibility and minimum requirements will be evaluated and scored by a group of independent reviewers, each having expertise in a separate area so that the reviewers as a whole cover the spectrum of activities covered by the pre-applications received.

Each pre-application will be reviewed by at least three reviewers. A rank order of all pre-applications will be established by averaging the individual reviewer ratings for each pre-application.

The program office staff will look at it for a substantial break in scores of the rank-ordered pre-applications to determine the final number authorized to submit qualifications. At least 45 pre-applications will be authorized to submit a full application.

Our program officers will make our recommendations to the selecting official, the Director of NOAA Education, on whether or not to authorize or not authorize a full application based on rank order and the selection factors listed in the next section, Section 5C.

Applicants will be notified of the status of their pre-application via an email to the authorized representatives on or about January 18, 2022. Full applications for applicants who are not asked to submit them will not be reviewed.

We're now going to go down to Section 7, Agency contacts on Page 43. All right, Agency contacts. You can contact our policy program team via email to oed.grants@noaa.gov. For further information about the NOAA Office of Education, please visit our office Web site at the URL provided here.

I will just stress please contact us at that email address provided, oed.grants@noaa.gov since we are checking it throughout this competition where if you email any one of our team members individually, we may be out or we may be unavailable at the time and so may not be able to respond to you quickly. So please use that team email address.

I will just note that we have definitions and references also provided at the end of this Notice of Funding Opportunity. But I will not review those. Instead, I will turn things over to Carrie.

Carrie McDougall: Thanks, John. All right. So we are now ready to take your questions. So the operator is going to come on and give you those instructions again and then you will have an opportunity to ask them. We have lots of time for questions. So we will just be sitting here waiting for you to ask some questions.

So no rush. If you need to kind of gather your thoughts, we'll just be sitting here waiting for you to ask some questions. So, operator, if you could come back on and let people know what to do to get in the question queue.

Coordinator: Thank you. If you would like to ask a question over the phone, please press star 1. Please make sure your phone is unmuted and record your name to ask a question. Again, that is star 1 to ask a question.

If you need to withdraw that request, it is star 2. One moment while we wait for questions to come in. Our first question comes from (xx). You may go ahead, sir.

(xx): Thank you. If a regional project that covered portions of multiple states that are eligible under the NOFO would be competitive and in addition if that regional project addressed one specific - addressed climate hazards and climate change risk in a specific type of area or specific type of hazard. Thank you.

Sarah Schoedinger: I'll try and take this one, and my colleagues can chime in to add their two cents' worth.

In terms of your question about the competitiveness of an application that is targeting audiences in multiple regions that are eligible, it's not more or less - location is not really something we can tell you whether it's going to be more competitive or not.

As I indicated it really - you can focus on one community. You can focus on multiple communities as long as they're eligible based on the geographic restriction we have imposed.

So the competitiveness comes down to how well you make the justification for the audiences you're targeting, the hazard that you're focused on that is affecting those target audiences and the approaches you're using. And this is where looking at those evaluation criteria really comes into play.

And I'm sorry I forgot the other half of your question. Maybe one of my colleagues remembers and can answer it.

John McLaughlin: This is John. I think the second part of the question was about if the project could focus on one specific hazard type, which if you feel there is a common hazard type that pertains to those communities, and you can make the case to reviewers that that is a significant hazard to focus on and a justified needs development focusing on that community, I think you can make that case.

Carrie McDougall: And this is Carrie. I just want to add to that. There is - I don't want to have any implication or leave an impression that we expect statewide implementation of projects.

If you look at the past work we've funded, you'll see that it's typically happening or commonly happening within cities and sometimes even within neighborhoods and cities. So we are definitely not expecting full state implementation of projects.

The other thing is I just want to draw your attention to the fact that we really want to see natural hazard and climate action plans be governing the work you're doing. And so those are frequently developed at a local government level, sometimes state levels. But please make sure to look at those and include how you will incorporate those plans into informing your work.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (xx). You may go ahead.

(xx): Hi, thank you. I guess a related question, one component is if you've previously funded projects in a particular state or region over the course of your trajectory does that have any influence on whether you would fund different projects or other projects in this next cycle?

And then the second part is about particular types of audiences or actors. So rather than thinking about citizenry, I'm thinking about particular kinds of resource users or natural resource users who are economically engaged but obviously affected by climate change.

Is there any - if one were to specify particular types of users, is that going outside the scope of the project? Thank you so much.

Carrie McDougall: What exactly is your second question? When you mentioned specific user stakeholders, I'm not sure what you mean. Maybe you could give an example?

(xx): So I think for example, farmers, fishermen, certain states that have natural resource oriented folks who may fall into these categories but are not, so like broadly consider everybody, but they are - like both play a role in being agents that are also impacted significantly.

Carrie McDougall: Yes. We generally - I mean, I guess it depends on how you would define the community you're working within. And so if you define the community as a community of local farmers that sort of operate as a community, then I think that would work. But we do have an emphasis on, you know, social cohesion within a community.

And so you would need to ensure that you're convincing us that this group of users functions in that way if that makes sense. And then if any of my colleagues want to chime in on the other answer or augment that answer.

Sarah Schoedinger: Yes. I'm sorry. I have to say, but can you reiterate what the first part of your question was? Because we've talked about so much so far. You had a two-part question, correct?

(xx): Yes, sorry. The first part was just about states that you funded. You funded in the past other kinds of local projects.

Sarah Schoedinger: Yes, I mean, we definitely - you know, as Carrie indicated, a lot of these projects are - they can be very localized, often are. And again, we strongly encourage people to take a look at what we've funded so far.

And so, you know, we may end up having multiple projects in a particular state because they're not reaching the same community. So I don't know that I can say we would make a decision - we would exclude your project.

Now if you're reaching similar audiences that are already reached in a small community that we're already targeting, that might be something where we'd be wondering why you're not working with the existing partners that we've already funded. That's my read on it.

So we don't - I mean, we do take geography into consideration when we're selecting applications overall and looking at our broad portfolio of investments. But the first thing we look at is the merit review criteria and how you fared according to that.

Coordinator: Thank you. The next question is (xx). You may go ahead.

(xx): You may have already answered my question. I was really looking at kind of the focus of funding, wondering if there was a priority over being able to use dollars to affect local action teams for kind of on the ground projects or if this is really more focused on educating, mobilizing and developing those climate action plans, in other words, more of the emphasis on the educational outcomes.

And I guess I'm going to still ask it. Do you have a priority or a preference in terms of - or an expectation in terms of the actual on the ground outcomes of any kind of a climate response or is it overall more of a priority to evaluate the education, engagement and decision-making?

Sarah Schoedinger: We do care about learning occurring during the project. Okay. So that's why we emphasize active and social learning.

But we also want to see action. So we want the target audiences through the activities that they're participating in to be able to be agents of change in their communities to build that community resilience.

So, you know, what that ends up looking like can vary depending on the community. But I don't - it's not like we are prioritizing educating people overtaking action. I think we want a balance of both.

Carrie McDougall: Yes. This is Carrie. I agree. I mean, we are really hoping that this is a different kind of education. It's not the kind of education that happens just while you're sitting at a desk learning about a problem.

But you're actively thinking about trade-offs, getting engaged, understanding a local government plan to address climate change, and then ideally. Yes, taking that to full

implementation and building rain gardens or addressing urban heat islands or so, yes, we would like to see that full suite of activities happening with audiences. That would be ideal.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (xx). You may go ahead.

(xx): Thank you. My question is, on behalf of my organization, which is structured as a network. We have a central nonprofit and we're affiliated with several other freestanding organizations that deliver programming.

One of our sites, one of our local service delivery sites, is eligible to apply as a priority two applicant. But our broader network would be eligible to apply as a priority one applicant.

And I'm struggling to figure out if both of those applications could go forward with the priority two App for the specific site and with our priority one App that would include that site, or if not, how you would advise us to structure those applications. I know it's complicated. And I hope that was clear enough for you to be able to respond. Thank you.

Sarah Schoedinger: Yes. That is a complicated question. And that's maybe one that we need to take offline to think about. And it may help to have a conversation, just a sidebar conversation with you all to understand exactly what you're proposing to do. Because it'll be tricky to make sure that the work that is being done, and I'm assuming you're talking about (xx) but I'm not sure if that's true, would be integral. You know, if the same type of work is being integrated into both projects, that's kind of a continuation of the Phase 1 Project we already funded that could be problematic.

So we should probably have a follow-up conversation to understand a little bit more in detail what you guys are thinking.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (xx). You may go ahead.

(xx): Hi. Thanks for taking us through the NOFO. My question, John reviewed this in the project content requirements. But I just wanted to double-check. Can I confirm that it is suggested, highly suggested to approach a NOAA science partner for the pre-application material, or are

applicants asked to approach these representatives after they've been accepted into the full application? Thank you.

John McLaughlin: Great question. Yes. There's a minimum requirement under the content requirement that you list your project partners including NOAA partners as part of your pre-application. Those, the intended partners at that stage, you are not beholden to that same list when you submit a full application. So you can certainly expand and/or edit your list of project partners between the pre-application and full application. And in fact, you may choose to do so based on feedback you receive to your pre-application.

That said. When to engage a NOAA partner, NOAA partners are not required for applications to this priority although they are strongly recommended, including NOAA assets is required, or not required but we do want projects to include NOAA assets. NOAA partners can be very helpful, especially in integrating NOAA assets into the project.

It's kind of up to you. We don't specify whether or not you have - when you engage such NOAA partners. If you have a strong relationship with a group that you fully intend to work with and you know they're going to be interested in such a project, listing them in the pre-application can certainly be a positive. And would probably be likely to help your pre-application.

However, if you don't have such and you don't feel there's time to establish such between the - before submitting the pre-application, you can move forward with pre-application without listing NOAA partners and then contact them if you are cleared to submit a full application and then list them in the full application phase. Kind of a long answer, I know. But I hope that answered your question.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (xx). Your line is open.

(xx): So taking into account the guidance, especially in the first sort of eight pages, it seems like you're looking for a process that's as inclusive as possible.

And what we found is that that would. Include identifying the hazards that are important to the community as part of the process. But then in terms of the eligibility, you were saying that you already want to know what hazards have been identified.

So I just wondered what - is it okay if the group, as part of what we're - like as part of the grant process, we identify those hazards together, for example, through community mapping. Like, if - could we apply but not know yet what the community wants to work on?

Carrie McDougall: We do have projects that have done something similar. And I think what you would want to do is identify the governing hazard mitigation plans or climate action plans that are pertinent to your area, to the area where - the geographic area where you'll be working as those will set sort of the broad suite of hazards that are affecting that geographic area.

And you would want to discuss those. And then you would want to discuss how you would lay out a process that would robustly help the target audiences identify the more specific ways that they would address hazards that are manifesting in their particular places.

But I think you'd want to start with that broader climate action or hazard mitigation plan as defining the overall hazards you'll be thinking about.

Does that make sense to you?

(zz): Yes. That's great. I'm in Massachusetts. So we have an MVP plan in each community that we work with and then we work with that.

Carrie McDougall: Yes.

(xx): So that would be great. And I'm sorry, part two, if that's allowed. I'm wondering about the action...and whether - you mentioned rain gardens and, you know, addressing or heat island effect. But could the action be political, for example, advocacy by, you know, you - to change laws?

Carrie McDougall: Yes. So we call out civic engagement as a specific action that we would like people to take. We, of course, do not advocate any particular political position, policy position that

should be taken. That would be up to the audience members to determine what they thought was appropriate.

But given getting involved civically is definitely an aspect of action that we are proponents of.

(xx): Thank you very much.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (xx). Your line is open.

(xx): Hi. I was wondering if you could just repeat the email that we should use.

John McLaughlin: Yes. This is John. I would definitely just recommend downloading the Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity and accessing it from there. But I will repeat it verbally as well. It is O-E-D .grants G-R-A-N-T-S @noaa N-O-A-A .gov.

Maggie: I wanted to chime in and say to visit noaa.gov/office-education/elp/grants/apply or just Google, NOAA Office of Education ELP Apply. And that also has the email address, as well as a lot of other information kind of summed up that you'll find in the NOFO as well. Thanks.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (xx). Your line is open.

(xx): Hi. Thank you. I'm just wondering if fiscally sponsored projects can be funded or fiscally sponsored by a different organization.

Carrie McDougall: I'll just give you an example of an existing project. So we have a project at the Science Museum in Virginia. They're a state-based organization. And they run their grants through the Science Museum of Virginia Foundation. And so the foundation serves as the fiscal agent. But the work is conducted by the Science Museum of Virginia.

So we do - we have a history of doing that. We typically look for a pretty tight coupling between the fiscal agent and the entity doing the work. So that would be something we would probably look at.

Does that answer your question?

(xx): Yes. That's great. Thank you so much.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (xx).

(xx): Yes. Okay. Similar to a previous question where someone stated that they did not, you know, have the hazards known at that time, but you all suggested look in hazard mitigation plans. You all have mentioned in here also connecting up with local government or state resiliency plans.

But would your grants cover the development of local or regional resiliency plan?

Carrie McDougall: We haven't funded that in the past. I could see potentially we would fund something where the activities would involve community engagement with people such that they could inform the development of a plan, sort of like idea collection and thinking through trade-offs.

But we - typically, you know, that's the work of a local government. Although it can be done by a nonprofit. You would just have to look and make sure you're really - the project is really meeting all of those required elements in the description of project activities and, you know, working the target audience toward learning and then becoming actively engaged in implementing resilience.

(xx): So in other words, you're drawing in your community to educate them and bring the science and the process out into the community...the end result would then, you know, potentially be they would engage with the local governments in the planning.

Carrie McDougall: Right, exactly, exactly.

(xx): That's the civic action, I guess. That's your...

Carrie McDougall: Yes. Okay.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (xx). Your line is open.

(xx): So can you say a few words about what costs are allowable? I'm having a hard time to imagine what kind of personnel support can be allowable under - because you mentioned that it doesn't support research, right?

Carrie McDougall: Right. Right, so, I mean, if you're a scientist, you know, working at a university and you're going to serve as the PI, you would - it would - there would be no problem with you charging your time to manage the project and implement the project as long as the project activities were not research. As long as the project activities were about education and getting community members involved locally in resilience.

Does that answer your question?

(xx): Yes. Yes. Thank you.

John McLaughlin: And this is John. I'll just reiterate. For the pre-application phase you should certainly be considering your budget, should you be cleared for a - submit a full application. But at this point in the pre-application phase, we really don't require much budget information beyond just the total request number.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (xx).

(xx): I'm going to ask another question kind of related to the research side, but also subcontracts. As I understand it, could go to nonprofits or businesses. Is that correct?

John McLaughlin: Yes. For-profit entities can be subcontractors on a ELP grant. So you can indeed have a for-profit business other than the contractor.

(xx): Okay. And part two of that is, you know, you all mentioned as far - as part of the NOAA resources the U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit, which has, you know, Climate Explorer and other things. So if folks are wanting to look into the future again, you know, you all were saying potentially use hazard mitigation planning - plans as the baseline.

But if your project - want to do the projections, do the climate risk assessment into the future, and you need to, you know, really look at - use Climate Explorer and other tools on that. But and one would want to then contract with a private entity to do that. Again, that is allowable you're saying.

John McLaughlin: So you're basically saying a hazard assessment provided by a private group being contracted as part of your project. There's...

(xx): Yes.

John McLaughlin: Yes. That would be an allowable cost. There's nothing that would prohibit such costs. You just have to justify it to reviewers in terms of such projection not being included in relevant housing plans already.

(xx): Right, right, right. You all are making kind of a distinction between not doing research, but again, in a sense, you need to do this analysis of the climate risk assessment, you know, looking at modeling into the future in order to address hazards into the future. You know, the hazard mitigation plan is not sufficient for that. So I just wanted to clarify that.

John McLaughlin: So I think if the work that you're talking about to do a hazard analysis is in support of the main goal of the project, that matches with the goal of this funding opportunity, then I think you could justify that. You know, the goal has to be for communities to have sufficient collective environmental literacy to take actions that build resilience to extreme weather and climate change in ways that contribute to community health, and social-economic equity.

So if you're saying what the hazards are is not well established for your area, and so you need to do analysis of what those challenges are in order to rerun such a project that builds collective environmental literacy I think you can make that case, - in order to make that case. However, it can't be the primary goal of your project. If the primary goal of your project is to run models and do an analysis of the hazards, that would probably not be responsive to the goal of this funding opportunity.

But if you're doing it in support of the project to build collective environmental literacy then I think you can try to make a case out of this.

(xx): Sure. To engage, and to educate and engage the community members. That would be the goal there. Yes. All right. Thank you.

Coordinator: The next question comes from (xx). You may go ahead.

(xx): Hi. Thank you. I was just curious if - you mentioned earlier about the project partners don't necessarily have to be the same from the pre-application to the full.

But my question is about the amount or the timeframe of the project. Do those have to match exactly from the pre-application to the full if we're invited to submit the full application?

John McLaughlin: No. It's a great question. They don't. It does have to be recognizable as the same project. You can't apply for a project in one location doing one type of activity. And your pre-application get approved and then have a project with a completely different location doing some completely different activities. So they're probably the same project. But your budget amount, your partners, those relevant details can change.

And in fact, they may change because you will be receiving feedback from the reviewers of your pre-application.

So the reviewers may indicate - may request something that requires such a change.

Coordinator: We have an additional question. xx, you may go ahead, please.

(xx): Hi there. Thank you so much. I just wanted to - I know you guys already mentioned this, but I just want to be extra sure about the project location versus the organization location. I know a fellow organization that had difficulty with this in a prior round of funding. And I want to reconfirm that if an organization headquartered in one state, but applies for a project in another state, the project will count towards the state where it is located, not where the offices of that organization are.

Carrie McDougall: Yes. And that's something that we changed from the last competition to this competition. We have altered the requirements there based on the feedback we got from the last time we had a different structure. So, yes, you are correct in the way you're understanding it.

(xx): Great. Thank you so much.

Coordinator: We have an additional question from (xx). You may go ahead.

(xx): Hi. Thank you. So this is just a follow-up question about community organizations and partners. I'm wondering if you can talk a little bit more about the kinds of compensation or the ways in which NOAA has experience, you know, making that work for the time of those organizations, because I think it's something we're very conscious of, but want to make sure we get right if we're involved in community collaborators as implementers or visionary partners in any project.

Carrie McDougall: Yes. Thanks for your sensitivity to that issue. It's definitely one that needs special attention. Community-based organizations are sometimes as small as - very small. Operate in neighborhoods and are sometimes run by all-volunteer entities and so don't have a lot of capacity to manage a federal sub-award.

And so and with projects we've funded in the recent past, we have - we're currently experimenting with having the lead institution provide stipends to the community-based organizations.

And that is - that appears to be at the right level for the kinds of organizations that are being funded. It compensates them for their work, allows flexibility for the kinds of costs they may bear. And the primary institution cannot take overhead out of the stipend. So it removes that potentially problematic power dynamic. So that's one way we have started experimenting with and we would be looking to do similar kinds of approaches moving forward.

(xx): If one were to relegate in a budget for stipends or for, right, however many community partners you're working with, is institutional overhead for the principal or (steering) organizations still part of the broader funding request, if separate from the stipends, as I understand it?

Carrie McDougall: Right. Yes. We would certainly expect the primary applicant to have their normal overhead rate as part of the application cost.

And then if you've done a federal grant before you - basically there are sections that there's whole cost categories that the primary institution is not allowed to apply that overhead rate to. And stipends are in that category. But you could apply the overhead rate to all of the other costs, for example.

Carrie McDougall: We want to just restate the importance of reading the entire funding opportunity. Don't rely on our reading the parts of it to you today. Please read the whole document. And there are also many more resources available at our Resilience Hub on noaa.gov. If you Google NOAA Resilience Hub, it'll lead you there.

And again, you know, just reiterating we anticipate this priority to be very competitive based on recent competitions we've run. So please make sure you're, you know, getting your pre-application very tidy and submitted on time. If you find you have additional questions after this teleconference and reading the funding opportunity, please look at our Frequently Asked Questions site and see if your questions are answered there.

And then if you need to reach us, the best way to do - submit your questions and be as specific as possible, please. You want to email that address John read to you earlier, which is oed.grants@noaa.gov. And again, any technical issues, grants.gov. You want to direct those questions to their customer support. And we will post the transcription of this teleconference on our FAQ site and the Apply page in about a week's time.

So thank you for your attention today and your interest in this opportunity. We hope that this teleconference provided answers to most of your questions. So we're signing off now and have a great rest of your day.

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